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Algeria

Exporter Guide

Annual

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Report Highlights:

Recent adjustments in the customs duties and taxes may encourage consumer-oriented products to come to Algeria.

Includes PSD changes: No

Includes Trade Matrix: No

Annual Report

Rabat [MO1], AG

SECTION I. MARKET OVERVIEW

Algeria is the second largest country in Africa (the tenth largest in the world), and is the larger importer of agricultural products in Africa, thus make it an enticing market. The energy sector provides most of its economic livelihood, accounting for more than 90 percent of export earnings, 25 percent of GDP, and 50 percent of government revenue. It is the world's second largest exporter of liquefied natural gas.

Agriculture represents about 12% of Algeria's GDP and provides a means of livelihood for at least 22% of the Algerian population. The country's arable land or useful agriculture land is about 8 million hectares, which is about 3 percent of its total area (238 million hectares). Largely desert, Algeria will never be self sufficient in food, and imports account for 75 percent of total needs. Agriculture remains a rainfall-dependent sector, and has suffered from drought for several consecutive years.

Current Economic Situation: Algeria has moved from a centrally planned to a largely market-oriented economy, and has undertaken a far-reaching macro-economic reform plan with the support of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Algeria completed a four-year structural adjustment program in May 1998 that included comprehensive fiscal and monetary reforms, as well as major social programs. In the field of agribusiness, the Government of Algeria (GOA) has proceeded to restructure small and medium-sized companies in efforts to revitalize those that are competitive. Companies have been closed, merged or reinforced, some monopolies have disappeared, and local private investments have risen sharply, with the result that the private sector has taken a substantial share of the market. However, economic growth is still constricted by large unemployment (over 30 percent), a lack of modern financial services and antiquated telecommunications systems. The GOA started the restructuring of the latter, with liberalization of the telephone market in summer 2001.

Banking System: The state banking system is made up of the Central Bank of Algeria (Banque d'Algerie) which is the monetary authority that regulates both private and six state-owned commercial banks. There are six state-owned banks: the External Bank of Algeria (BEA), the Popular Credit of Algeria (CPA), the Local Development Bank (BDL), the Agriculture Development Bank (BADR), the National Bank of Algeria (BNA), and the Algerian Development Bank (BAD).

The first private sector bank, Union bank (merchant banking institution) has been in operation since 1996. Now there are five additional private banks in operation: the El-Khalifa Bank, the Algerian Bank of Industry and Commerce (BCIA), the Algerian Investment Bank (AIB), the Algerian Company of Banking (CAB), the Regional Mouna Bank in Oran.

The Central bank has granted operating licenses to nine foreign banks: Citibank, (the first), Arab Banking Corporation, El Baraka Bank, Société Générale and Natexis, Western Union, Ryan Bank, EFG Hermes, BNP Paris bas El Djazair, and Banque Générale de la Méditerranée. Monetary transactions are strictly cash-based, and banking services do not go far beyond retail services and small-scale trade financing. Outside of joint ventures with the major parastatals such as oil entity SONATRACH, long-term financing for large-scale projects is quite limited.

Key Demographic Development: Algeria has about 30 million people in 2001. Sixty percent of the population live in cities, 20 percent in semi-built-up cities and 20 percent in rural areas. The capital Algiers, with 3 million people, is the nation's largest city. Oran is second with 1.5 million people. Industry and services employ half of the country's working population, while 22 percent are employed by Agriculture. Algeria's official language is Arabic but Amazigh (a Berber language) and French are spoken throughout the country. The prevailing religion is Islam.

For the most part, Algerians have traditional cooking habits, but changes are occurring in the cities where the tendency of young households is to adopt the western lifestyle. As the number of working women has increased, habits have started to change, and consumers are turning to ready-for-use or semi-processed products. Some consumers buy home-made products directly from non working women who sell their products in order to help the family income.

Total Population (2001)	30.6 million
Population Growth Rate (2001)	1.5 %
Labor Force Growth Rate (1998)	4.4 %
Projected Population (2002)	31.04 million
Births per 1,000 population (1998)	23
Deaths per 1,000 population (1998)	5
Infant Deaths per 1,000 live births (1998)	42
Total fertility Rate (per women)	2.8
Percentage of Men/Percentage of Women	50.5 - 49.5
Percentage of Population under the Age of 15	35.19 %
Percentage of Population between 15 and 65	60.85 %
Percentage of Population over the Age of 65	3.96 %
Illiteracy Rate Men/Women (1998)	23.65 - 40.27 %
Population Living in Rural Areas (1998)	20 %
Average Number per household (1998)	6.5

Consumer Spending: Since the economy was liberalized in 1997, the number of private importers has risen sharply, and consumers have become more accustomed to seeing imported products and semi-processed products sent to the consumers through little stores and small private supermarkets. The former state-owned distribution chain (ONACO) was restructured in 1980 to form, ENAPAL, with wholesale units linked directly to the state supermarket Company (SNGA). The latter was closed in 1996, and recently some important private businessmen have bought some of the old state supermarkets in order to re-open them as local private chains. Consumers can find both bulk and packaged products, both local and imported, even though the latter are little expensive for some households with low income.

Advantages	Challenges
Local production is heavily dependent on rainfall and meets only 25% of the need.	Geographical disadvantage, due to proximity with Europe.
American products are always appreciated as good quality for Algerian.	Algerian importers usually do business through Europe
The local food processing industry is improving and upgrading, and is mostly based on imported raw materials.	No direct shipping lines, making transit from Europe necessary.
Distribution sector needs to be improved, with need for American know-how. Private sector willing to sell with American brand names.	Custom duties on high value products
	Traditional distribution network still predominant
	Many products need to be promoted in Algeria.
	Lack of knowledge about US standards, grades.
	French continues to be predominant business language.

SECTION II. EXPORTER BUSINESS TIPS

- G** Standards are same as Codex Alimentarius standards. Some American grades and standards are being introduced into regulations in the field of quality control of grains and pulses.
- G** To clear customs some sanitary certificates are required (depending on the products), such as Dairy.
- G** Imported goods are subject to custom duties, VAT, and some local specific taxes. Some customs dues fees of 2% and custom processing fees of 4% have to be added to the applied tariffs.

- G** With a new economic reforms program, starting from July 2001 Algeria replaced some specific taxes for high value products. The old "Valeur administree"-- a local tax arbitrarily decided upon by authorities and paid in Algerian dinars--has been replaced by a new temporary additional duty (DAP), which is now 60% but will decrease 12% each year to become 0% in 2006. The TSA (additional specific tax) has been replaced by TIC (domestic consumption tax), only about 20 products are concerned by this tax (tariff cod chapters 08/09/16/22/63/87). The latter are considered as luxury goods.
- G** In addition, the custom duties (which used to range from 5 to 45 %) have been reduced to a maximum 40 % since July 2001. Therefore, the rates currently applied range from 5 to 40 %. In 2002, the maximum rate will be reduced to 30 %.
- G** The VAT (value added tax) has been reduced from 14 to 21% to range now from 7 to 14 %.
- G** Algeria uses the metric system for measurement.
- G** French is still the predominant business language. French promotional materials will definitely have an advantage in dealing with importers.
- G** Most importers are located in the big cities and import through the main active ports (Algiers, Oran, Bejaia, and Jijel). They import both bulk and packaged products. The products are distributed to wholesalers in wholesale markets, then sold in small stores, supermarkets and open markets.

SECTION II. MARKET SECTOR STRUCTURE AND TRENDS

The limiting factor to increasing in demand for consumer-oriented products is still the combination of low incomes and high consumer prices for imported products. During the period of state monopoly, imported products were supported by the state and their prices were lower, so more Algerian consumers were able to purchase them. Since the privatization, however products are sold with their real prices.

With the processing sector improving, many food processors can offer products with lower prices by importing the raw material and processing it locally. For example, the milling sector can offer cheaper semolina and flour produced locally from imported wheat, and dairy processors offer dairy products processed locally from imported milk powder or cheddar cheese.

The new adjustments in customs duties and taxes allow consumers to purchase some luxury goods at lower prices. For example, bananas used to be sold at 450 Algerian Dinars(\$ 5.88), whereas now consumers can buy them for only 140 AD (\$1.83). Hopefully, these adjustments will help to encourage Algerian consumption of consumer-oriented products, although other problems (long shipping times and lack of direct shipping lines) continue to face U.S. consumer-oriented products.

High value Products for Food Processing Sector:

With local processors becoming numerous and quality conscious, U.S. suppliers can play a major role in fulfilling the demand for regular quantities of raw materials. Important processing sectors include the dairy processing sector and the milling sector (with about 100 mills currently operational and 80 on the way). Some important processors prefer to import their raw materials directly rather than buying them locally from importers, because their market is not regularly supplied. Some of them have already contacted U.S. suppliers but have not gotten replies.

High value Products for Hotels, Restaurants and Institutional:

High-ranked hotels and restaurants buy most of their products locally. U.S. suppliers should try to work with the distributors to enter the market, as hotel managers are rarely willing to get involved in import operations because of the small volume involved. The potential market for U.S. consumer-oriented products may interest essentially five upscale hotels (5 stars) concentrated in Algiers (Sheraton, Hilton, El Aurassi, El-Djazair, Sofitel and Mercure) as well as some Asian, Italian, and western-style restaurants.

Export of Seafood Products to Algeria:

Algeria is looking for partners in order to improve the seafood and fishing sector. Algeria consumes 3.2 kg of fish products per year per capita, and produces 70,000 - 100,000 tons of fish per year (compared with Morocco, which produces about 1 million tons per year). Algeria has 15 ports for fishing and 50 percent of the flotilla is 20 years old. In the markets, seafood is very expensive and out of reach of many households. For example, prawns cost at least 500 AD (\$6.54) per kilogram, and the most popular and cheapest seafood, sardines, cost 100 AD(\$1.30) per kilo. Most canned tuna sold in supermarkets is imported, as well as frozen fish and seafood. Fresh fish is only sold in open markets. Some private canners are beginning operations and need raw materials, which could be a good opportunity for US seafood products

Fast Food Franchising:

Algerians are fascinated with American culture because of movies, so they know very well the famous hamburger. In many cities in Algeria, fast food stores are proliferating with names crafted to take advantage of this familiarity with American culture: Mac kiki or Mac Moussa. Last year, the Agricultural Affairs Office received many requests for the Mac Donald's address to ask for representation in Algeria. Other fast-food franchises could be well-received as well.

SECTION IV. BEST HIGH VALUE PRODUCT PROSPECTS

- Pulses (lentils, peas, chickpeas, beans)
- Dried fruits (dries prunes, dried raisins)
- Dried Nuts (Almonds, peanut, pistachio)
- Canned fruits (tropical)
- Canned corn
- Confectionaries
- Honey
- Whisky and Beer
- Cereal derivatives
- Skimmed Milk powder
- Sauces (ketchup...)

SECTION V. KEY CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION:

The office of Agricultural affairs at the American Embassy Algiers provides trade servicing and information about Algerian market. The free service provided by the office includes market briefing, market tours, lists of importers, setting up agendas and meetings, hotel reservations and in some cases providing translation and transportation.

US. Embassy / USDA- Foreign Agricultural Service Contacts:

Merriitt Chesley, Regional Agricultural Attaché(Rabat) E-mail: AgRabat@fas.usda.gov

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Local Contacts:**Rachid Benaissa, General Secretary**

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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE.

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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, PLANT PROTECTION AND TECHNICAL
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Rachid Bouguedour, Director of Veterinary Services

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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, VETERINARY AND SANITARY SERVICES

Ammar Boularak, Inspector Central of Quality Control and Squad Services.
Misistère du Commerce
Batiment Sonatrach, Boulevard Mohamed V, Alger, Algérie.
Phone: (213-21) 63-11-53
Fax : (213-21) 63-11-53
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, QUALITY CONTROL AND SQUAD SERVICES

Hocine Hourri, Director of Customs Center for Statistics
Direction des Douanes, Centre National de l'Informatique et des Statistiques.
17, rue des Mourabitounes, Place du 1er Novembre, Alger, Algérie.
Phone : (213-21) 71-56-00
Fax : (213-21) 71-56-40
CUSTOMS SERVICES

HOTELS:

Hotel El-Djazair (5 stars)

Avenue Souidani Boudjemaa- Algiers
Phone : (213-21) 69-21-21 or (213-21) 23-09-33 to 37
Fax : (213-21) 69-35-08
(213-21) 69-27-00

Hotel El-Aurassi (5 stars)

Avenue Frantz Fanon- Algiers
Phone : (213-21) 74-82-52
Fax : (213.21) 71-72-87 or (213-21) 71-72-90

Hotel Sheraton- Club des Pins; (5 stars)

Staoueli- Algiers
Phone : (213-21) 37-77-77 or (213-21) 37-88-88
Fax : (213-21) 37-74-10 or (213-21) 37-77-00

Hotel International (5 stars)

Palais des Expositions - Algiers
Phone : (213-21) 21-96-96 or (213-21) 20-10-10
Fax : (213-21) 21-06-06 or (213-21) 21-95-74

Hotel Sofitel (5 stars)

Le Hamma Algiers
Phone : (213-21) 68-52-10
Fax : (213.21) 67-31-42

FOOD & AGRICULTURAL FAIRS:

- ' DOMESTIC PRODUCTION FAIR: Held each year in October, this fair is the best to reach local operators in food processing and manufacturing, as well as Institutions involved in the economic process (banks, etc.).
- ' AGRICULTURE FAIR : Held every year during March. This fair features farmers, breeders, food processors, producers and importers, and all those who are directly linked to the profession (agriculture services, agriculture chambers, Institutes, etc.).
- ' ALGIERS INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR : Held each year in mid-June, it gathers a large number of foreign participants. The U.S. sponsored a U.S. pavilion in 2000 and 2001 after an absence of seven years.

WORKING DAYS / HOURS

- ' Working days in Algeria are Saturday through Wednesday
- ' Typically working hours are 8:30-12:00 and 13:00pm-16:30pm.
- ' Banks and insurance companies have different week-ends (Friday and Saturday)
- ' Algeria is on Greenwich Mean Time + 1 .
- ' US Embassy Algiers and FAS Office working days and hours are Saturday through Wednesday from 8:00 -12:00 and 13:00- 5:00 pm.
- ' Most of the active population and administration close in August for vacation

HOLIDAYS:

- ' Religious holidays follow the lunar calendar and thus move back 10 days every calendar year.
- ' Below are Algerian holidays for the calendar year 2002.

November 01, 2001	Algerian Revolutionary day
December 16, 2001	Aid El Fitr (End of the holly month of Ramadan)
January 1, 2002	New year
February 21, 2002	Aid El Adha (Feast of Lamb/Pilgrimage)
March 15, 2002	Moharem (First Moslem New Year)
March 24, 2002	Achoura (Muslim Feast)
May 1, 2002	Algerian Labor Day
May 24, 2002	Aid El Mawlid (Prophet's birthday)
June 19, 2002	National Recovery
July 5, 2002	Algerian Independence Day

A. KEY TRADE & DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Agricultural imports from All Countries (2000) (\$Mil.)/US. Market Share (%)	2,500	13%
Consumer Food Imports From All Countries (\$Mil.) / US. Market Share(%)		
Edible Fishery Imports From All Countries(\$Mil.)US market Share (%)		
Total Population (Millions)/Annual Growth Rate (%) (2001)	30.60	1.5%
Urban Population (Millions) / Annual Growth Rate (%)	18	1.5%
Number of Major Metropolitan Areas (a)	14	-
Size of the Middle Class (Millions) / Growth Rate (%) (b)	5	
Per Capita Gross Domestic Products (\$US)	\$1600	
Unemployment Rate (%)	30%	
Per Capita Food Expenditures (\$US) (c)	\$800	
Percentage of Female Population Employed (1998)	9.7%	-
Exchange Rate (US \$1 is: in Algerian Dinars)	76.77	-

(a) Areas which have International airports and ports with population in excess of 600,000

(b) Estimated population that can regularly purchase imported food products

(c) AgAtt Estimates.